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TOPIC Motor Transport Service of the Hungarian Armed Forces

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Central Motor Transport Instruction Battalion of the Army.

1. The central motor transport instruction battalion in Budapest was located in a barracks installation situated on the east side of Zach Street (No 4) and the south side of Kamenffy Street. In September 1950, the instruction battalion was transferred to Miskolc (R 49/J 87) and billeted in the former Constabulary Barracks located in that city. It was directly subordinate to Major General Karoly Janza of the Defense Ministry, who was also in charge of all courses of instruction pertaining to motor transport service and ordnance engineering or mechanics. The instruction battalion, whose staff also included the then Captain Hambach (fnu), instruction officer, later promoted to the rank of major, was organized into the headquarters and three training companies of 200 men each. The battalion dealt with basic training as well as technical motor transport training proper including column runs.*

Course of Instruction for Motor Transport Officer Candidates and Motor Vehicle Maintenance NCO Candidates of the Army.

2. The course of instruction was started in the central motor vehicle repair shop in Matyasfold (Q 48/H 62), transferred to Budapest in early September 1950 and continued there in the barracks installation located at 4 Zach Street until 28 September 1950. Personalities of the course of instruction included Captain Laszlo Penzes, commanding officer; Captain Jozsef Nagy, political officer; and Major Hambach (fnu), instruction officer.
3. It consisted of one course for motor transport officer candidates, organized into headquarters and two companies with a total strength of about 120 men, and one for motor vehicle maintenance NCO candidates, organized into a headquarters and two companies with a total strength of about 96 men, the companies being reorganized in accordance with the individual fields of instruction. The course was attended by trainees, 20 to 35 years old, about one half of whom were detailed to the course upon the recommendation of nationalized concerns.

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4. The trainees were trained in the whole field of technical motor transport service, underwent practical training at workshops, received political indoctrination, and were instructed in estimating and utilizing the terrain. They were shown the characteristic features of the individual motor vehicles being used in the Hungarian Armed Forces and were required to do repair work themselves. After 28 September 1950, those who had passed the final examination were appointed motor vehicle maintenance sergeants or commissioned as motor transport officers in the presence of Major General Karoly Janza. They were told by Major General Janza that the 3-week leave which had been promised them could not be granted because the army was going to be reorganized. Before being appointed maintenance technical sergeants or commissioned as motor transport officers, the trainees had to pledge themselves to serve for one more year on the completion of their active duty. They were virtually forced to do so, since this requirement had not been mentioned originally when they had been asked to file an application for admittance to the course.
5. The trainees of the course for maintenance NCO candidates wore brown epaulets with a silver T, and brown collar patches with a silver button. The trainees of the motor transport officer candidate course wore the same insignia except that the color of the T and the button was gold. No trainees wore rank insignia during the course. On the completion of the course, the participants of both courses received vermilion epaulets and collar patches similar to those allegedly worn by all motor transport and ordnance personnel. Motor transport officers, as well as motor vehicle maintenance sergeants, wore a gold winged wheel with an arrow pointing downward on the collar patches as branch of service insignia.
6. During the course of instruction, the political attitude of the trainees was closely watched. One trainee who stated that the quality of the U.S.-made vehicles was superior to that of the Soviet-made ones was dismissed from the course.
7. Upon completion of the course, the trainees were assigned to individual posts, namely 4 men to Papa (P 48/Y 30), 1 to Gyoengyoes (Q 48/J 24), 2 to Eger (R 48/J 55), 1 to Mór (P 48/Y 81), 2 to Kaposvar (Y 4/A 95), 1 to Miskolc (R 49/J 87), 1 to the border guard troops in Kiskunhalas (Y 6/N 70), 2 to Ercsi (Q 48/N 39), 1 to Suettoer (P 48/X 83), 1 to Tata (P 48/Y 94), 1 to Szekesfehervar (Q 48/Z 00), 3 to Piliscsaba (Q 48/H 34), 5 to the barracks installation at 4 Zach Street, Budapest, 6 to the Defense Ministry in Budapest, and 1 each to the engineer unit in the New Barracks, the AAA unit in the Cavalry Barracks, and the motorized mortar artillery regiment in Komarom (P 48/Y 65). Inasmuch as only regiments, independent battalions, and command agencies had authorized places for motor vehicle maintenance NCOs, the trainees were assigned to these units and agencies located in the various posts listed above, in source's opinion.
8. In mid-March 1951, a new course of instruction was started in the barracks installation at 4 Zach Street.

General Data on Motor Vehicles and Motor Vehicle Supply.

9. By 18 March 1951, the motor vehicles used by the Hungarian Armed Forces still included about 80 percent US-made ones, mainly jeeps, weapon carriers and GAC trucks purchased from U.S. stock after the war. The motor vehicles were overhauled, three were cannibalized into two, and usable remainin; components were stored. Due to a very acute shortage of suitable spare parts, US-made motor vehicles had to be replaced by Hungarian and Soviet-made ones. Hungarian-made motor vehicles known to

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source included 3-ton Raba-Super trucks equipped with a 4-cylinder engine produced in series, and suitable for personnel and material carrier on well-maintained roads, but not for cross-country runs, which generally resulted in valve spring fractures, armature troubles and ball-bearing failures; 3-ton Raba Speziel, equipped with a 4-cylinder engine improved in comparison with the Raba Super truck engine, not yet mass-produced and too few in actual use to establish its value; 2 1/2-ton Raba-Botond trucks, equipped with a special 4-cylinder Raba engine, fit as personnel carrier and prime mover of guns, no longer manufactured, the available vehicles originating from the stock of the old Hungarian Army; 3-ton Csepel diesel trucks, equipped with a 4-cylinder Steyr diesel engine, noted for numerous failures such as frequent broken valve springs and troubles with the leaf springs made of too hard steel, driven with diesel oil in summer and gasoline in winter, and mass-produced; 5-ton D-5 Mavag trucks, equipped with a long 6-cylinder diesel engine and also used as a repair shop truck; and Raba Sedans. Soviet-made motor vehicles known to source included GAZ cars, an imitation of the US-made jeep, but 30 cm wider and less finished; 4-ton ZIS trucks equipped with a 4-cylinder ZIS engine, excellent as personnel carrier and prime mover of guns, but rapidly overheating and relatively slow; Popyeda cars, equipped with a Soviet-made 4-cylinder jeep engine and a closed body and serving as command cars; 3-ton YA-12 caterpillar prime movers, used to tow the guns of artillery and AAA units; Popyeda sedans; and IZS motorcycles.

10. Motor vehicles for the Hungarian Armed Forces were inspected and taken over by the army motor vehicle central depot in Matyasfoeld, [redacted] whose installations, in which building activities were observed in February 1951, partly adjoin the airfield to the west and are partly located on both sides of Karolyi Mihaly Street. [redacted]

The vehicles were [redacted] distributed to the individual units in accordance with schedules issued by the Defense Ministry. [redacted]

11. Fuel was distributed to the individual units by means of tickets issued by the Defense Ministry [redacted] and were accepted by every service station in Hungary. The fuel quantity assigned monthly was based on a 600-km consumption, with motor vehicles of more than average consumption individually reported to the ministry. A so-called alert fuel stock was available at each unit. Prior to mid-March 1951, the alert fuel stock kept in readiness at the motorized mortar artillery regiment in Komarom was the quantity assigned monthly for five weapon carriers; the motor vehicles of the unit totaled 17 weapon carriers, 4 trucks and 1 motorcycle. Aside from that, 2 liters of washing agents, either petroleum or crude oil, 2 kg of lubricating oil, 2 kg of engine oil and 0.5 kg of gear oil were assigned per 100 liters of fuel. So-called Tavotta oil was distributed as lubricating oil. Prior to 1 March 1951, BB oil was distributed as engine oil, which was to be replaced after every 1,000-km in order to maintain engines in a good technical condition. After 1 March 1951, a so-called first-quality oil, which allegedly was to be replaced after every 2,500 to 3,000-km run only, was introduced. C oil served as gear oil.
12. Tire supply was adequate. The tires supplied included inferior quality Hungarian-made so-called Cordatic tires, manufactured in Budapest, and good US-made ones.

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13. The Hungarian Armed Forces had organizational motor vehicle repair shops of small and medium size. Each regiment had a small repair shop staffed with 1 motor vehicle maintenance sergeant and 3 motor vehicle mechanics and equipped with manually operated tools only. Each division had a medium-size organizational repair shop staffed with 1 motor vehicle maintenance sergeant and 5 or 6 mechanics and equipped with 1 boring and 1 grinding machine, both electrically operated, 1 welding apparatus, 1 Northon lathe with a center distance of 250 mm, and lacquering and spraying equipment. Motor vehicles in need of major repair work were taken to the central motor vehicle depot in Matyasfoeld for further distribution to civilian large-scale repair shops and nationalized plants, where they would be under repair for up to six months due to the shortage of replacement parts for both Hungarian and Soviet-made motor vehicles. In September 1950, the Hungarian Army had only three special maintenance platoons, each having three 5-ton D-5 Mavag trucks and one 3-ton truck. The introduction of more platoons of this type was envisaged.

14. Prior to mid-March 1951, women drivers were frequently observed by source in motor vehicles of the armed forces. For instance, women were employed at the garage of the Defense Ministry on Ezredes Street, Budapest. Women drivers frequently drove cars occupied by officers of the ministry inspecting the troops.

* Comment. A previous report by another stated that the central motor transport school of the Hungarian Army was located in the same barracks installation. Hambach is the director of training of the school.

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